

Farmer 706
THREE LETTERS

TO

**A Member of the Honourable
House of Commons,**

FROM A

Country Farmer,

Concerning the

PRICES of PROVISIONS;

AND

**Pointing out a sure Method of pre-
venting FUTURE SCARCITY.**

LONDON:

**Printed for J. Brotherton in Cornhill, No. 32.
1766.**

[Price One Shilling.] 10

W. Musgrave.

To the READER.

THE Honourable Gentleman, to whom the following Letters were address'd, has sent Copies of them to the Publisher, with a view of discovering the Sentiments of the Public on this important Matter. He has desired no Alteration may be made in the Language or Sentiment, but that the Farmer, with all his Faults, may be left to speak for himself; and the Public may be assured this has been scrupulously complied with.



THREE LETTERS

TO

A Member of the Honourable
House of Commons.



The FIRST LETTER.

Honourable Sir,

A LETTER, (and of this length too) from a Man in my Situation to a Member of the Honourable House of Commons, may somewhat surprize you; and yet when I assure you there is no Petition in it for Place or Pension, but that it is aimed at least for the Good of our Country,

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I flatter myself you will condescend to read it thro'; and tho' from your Knowledge of my Inability to produce what may be worth your Attention, you will I fear read it with a Prepossession against, rather than for it; yet, I trust the Matter of it is of Consequence enough to rouse every *Englishman* to due Consideration; and if Truth and Reason happen to be the Produce of the Pen of a poor illiterate Farmer, (who not from any sinister motive, but merely with a View to the Common-weal, ventures out of his Sphere, and dares to give his Sentiments on important Subjects, to one whose Knowledge is greatly superior to his own) it may perhaps deserve a second Perusal; this however you'll be the Judge of, and after once reading commit it to the Flames, if you shall esteem it worthy no better a Fate.— Without further Preface, therefore, I shall enter on the Business of this Letter, only premising that neither proper Method nor Language is to be expected from one bred to the Plough, and who has very few Traces about him of the scanty Portions of Grammar he once obtained at a Country Free-School

School near the Place of his Birth. I must also here remind you, that I am as totally disinterested with respect to the Subject before me, as any other *Englishman* can be ; for tho' I call myself a Farmer, yet I rather assume the Name from what I have been, than from what I am, as I have now in my own Hands only half a dozen Fields, occupied by way of Amusement, rather than with a View to Profit ; Providence having in my old Age enabled me to live without Labour.

It is now, and has been indeed for some Years, the Subject of universal Lamentation, that Provisions in general bear an exorbitant Price, and indeed so far is it now carried, that even those of moderate Fortunes feel the Consequences of it very seriously : what then must be the Case with the Poor, those most useful Members of the Community ? Their Madness in tumultuous Rising in different Parts of the Kingdom, gives the best Answer to this Question, and demonstrates the Desperation they feel ; for what else but desperate Madness can possibly urge People

to risk their Lives in the Execution of Purposes, which, if executed safely, would only tend to encrease the Evils they complain of? It never can be thought the Effect of sober Reason, to assemble in Mobs, and to destroy Barns, Granaries, Corn, Meal, and Mills, with a View to bring about national Plenty; on the contrary, 'tis plain to common Sense, all these Steps naturally tend to produce general Confusion, Want, and Distress, and therefore I call them desperately mad. But you will say, Why do you endeavour to point out an Evil known to every Man? and that Methods have been taken, and are taking to obviate the primary Evil, Scarcity; and the Effects will cease with the Cause. 'Tis true, Methods have been taken, and are taking for this purpose, but that these Methods either singly, or all together, are insufficient to obtain the End in view, is what I mean to shew you; and that one may be found amply sufficient, which has never yet been attempted, or I believe even thought of, and which will certainly not only remedy the present Grievance, but prevent a Possibility of its Return.

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If I can do this, I believe you will not repent the Trouble you take in perusing this Letter ; and I am sure your Regard for your Country will compel you to exert yourself in Parliament, that Plenty (unless Providence has determined to destroy us) may be established by Law.

To pursue my Plan as methodically as I can, I will singly and shortly treat of all the Means already attempted, or which I have heard are intended to be attempted, or ever talked of being try'd, to remove the Evil complain'd of : The first, as it is the Act of the Legislature, and therefore I put it first, is the Law against Foresters, Engrossers, and Regrators ; and far be it from me so much to censure the Wisdom of the Legislature, as to suppose these Laws well executed, will not be of some publick Advantage ; but yet I may modestly venture to say, that notwithstanding the Execution of these Laws, if there be a real national Scarcity, Provisions will be dear, and if there be a real national Plenty, Provisions will be cheap, whether they be executed or not ; so
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that this is far from adequate to the Purpose wish'd for ; and as the Good of the whole State ought to be the Object of Legislation, and not the Good of a Part, I could I believe undertake to prove, that the only Times in which these Laws can be of much use, are Times of partial Plenty, and partial Scarcity ; and that in those Times, if they are beneficial to one County, they are in equal Proportion prejudicial to another ; but this being beside my Plan, I shall at present omit it,

The second Method taken by the Legislature, is the Licensing Badgers of Corn, and the third for fixing the Measure of Corn to one Standard, but both these Schemes are under the same Predicament with the Laws against Forestallers, and can be of no additional use ; for if there be a general Plenty, let who will buy or carry Corn, or however it be measured, it will be cheap ; if there be a general Scarcity it will be dear ; besides all the World knows that these Laws are not now, nor ever have been obeyed ; especially that ascertaining the Measure of Corn ; and tho'

Badgers

Badgers are licensed at the Sessions, yet it is done in so private a Manner, and often even at Days fixed by Ajournment, that there is no Opportunity given to oppose the granting a Licence, tho' the Badger has ever so often forfeited his Recognizance; but this is also foreign to my Purpose, and therefore I say no more upon it; 'tis sufficient for me that these Means neither singly, nor all together, can affect materially the Price of Corn.

To allow of Exportation of Corn with a Bounty, and of Importation at the same Time Duty free, which was lately attempted, as it was the Act of the Legislature, I will not venture to descant upon; but upon the Face of it, it appears in my Apprehension very inadequate to answer the End desired, and in Fact it proved so.

The Acts for prohibiting the Exportation of Corn for a limited Time, have been a temporary Relief, but also a temporary Injury to the Trade of the Nation; and in such Times, tho' they may have prevented a very considerable Rise in the Price of Corn, yet they have never considerably lowered it;
but,

but on the contrary have often given a Handle to griping Farmers, to keep back their Corn from Sale, and to hold up the Price under Pretence of Scarcity, tho' in Truth there was Plenty for Home-Consumption.

Whether a late Proclamation was constitutionally legal or no, I will not presume to say, tho' I own it appears not plain to me, how any Authority can prohibit constitutionally the Exportation of any Commodity, which an Act of the whole Legislature has not only permitted, but encouraged by a Bounty, while that Act is in full Force; however, I will neither venture to argue for, or against the Lawfulness of it, lest I should unwillingly err, in going with the Cobbler beyond my Last; the Effects are all I have to do with, and they will speak for themselves. No sooner was this Proclamation issued, but the Price of Corn rose all over the Kingdom; and many Markets that before were well stock'd with Wheat on every Market-Day, did not produce sufficient for the Consumption of the Neighbourhood; and some to my Knowledge had
not

not a Bushel of Corn brought to, or sold in, them for several Weeks together: nay the Farmers in my Neighbourhood, who had never complain'd of their Crop, and who had no doubt but there was Corn enough in the Kingdom sufficient for two Years Home Consumption, immediately pretended to apprehend a Scarcity, and refused to sell at the Price they freely sold the Market Day preceding, so that either the Royal Authority convinced them that there was not Corn enough in the Kingdom for a Year, or they artfully pretended to be so convinced by it.

Having thus examined the Methods already used for lowering the Price of Corn, (upon which I believe the Price of other Provisions in a great Measure depends) and found them all ineffectual, and some prejudicial, as rather naturally tending to enhance than to lessen the Prices, I will now a little animadvert on the Schemes thrown out, in News Papers and Pamphlets, by

some who wickedly, or weakly encourage the Discontent of the People, and foment their Rage till it ripens into open Riots, and tumultuous Mobbing.

The first Subject of Abuse is the Bounty given for the Exportation of Corn, to which they attribute all the Evils the Poor complain of; why, say they, should the Nation pay for carrying away our Corn, which necessarily raises the Price to the Poor at Home? The Answer is plain, before this Bounty was granted by Parliament on Corn exported, the Poor of this Kingdom scarce ever ate Wheaten Bread; 'tis to this Bounty's having encreased the Cultivation and Manuring of Lands, that Wheat is even now so easy to be gotten as it is, in what we ungratefully term a Scarcity, nay some have called a Famine, but what our Fathers would have considered as a Time of the greatest Plenty. To prove this, we have but to remember what Accounts we have of the Prices of Corn, for some Time before the Revolution;

tions: the Medium Nominal Price was then as high as what we now complain of; and I call it the Nominal Price, because the Value of Money is lessened one half since that Time, and therefore tho' nominally the then Medium Price was the same as in this Time of supposed Scarcity, yet it was in Fact equal to Twenty Four Pounds by the Load for Wheat of our Money; and it was impossible, when the Price of Labour was very considerably less, that the Poor at that Time could purchase Wheat for Bread; but when the Bounty took place, more Lands were immediately cultivated; the Lands before cultivated were better manured; the *English* Farmers began to cultivate for the World, instead of Home-Consumption; and the Kingdom soon wore a different Aspect; the Poor not only could afford out of their former Wages to buy Wheat for Bread as well as the Gentlemen, but as there was more to do for the Poor, in Consequence of greater Crops, their Wages were raised in order to encourage

them to labour more chearfully ; and in Consequence of this single political Stroke of our Legislature, not a Person in the Kingdom but reaped an Advantage ; the Lands became more valuable to the Landlord ; the Farmer paid more Rent, and yet got richer ; the Labourer had better Wages, and better Bread also, and that at a less Price than before ; the Merchant gained by the Exportation ; the Mariners were better employed, and Ship-Building encreased ; which last includes the Encouragement of a numerous, and very useful Set of Men to this Kingdom ; and the Balance of the Nation's Trade with foreign States was encreased by all the Value of the Corn exported ; and it is to be added to all these National Advantages, that from the Time the Bounty on Exportation took place to this Day, the Medium Price for Wheat has not been more than Eight Pounds a Load, which upon the Supposition of Money's being lessened One Half in Value, is not more than One Third of the Price before

before the Legislature took this Method of encouraging Agriculture? In this Place it ought to be observ'd too, that, many Times before, we had real Famines in the Land; for when we cultivated only for Home-Consumption, if the Year was unkind and the Crop fell short, real Want ensued of course; but in the worst of Years that ever has since happened, when we have murmur'd ever so loudly, we have always had more than enough for ourselves. And shall we be mob'd out of these public and private Advantages? or shall we be preach'd out of them by Scriblers in News Papers, and Pamphlets, sent into the World by Persons who write in Compliance with the Taste of the Times, and publish only that they may eat? Forbid it the Wisdom of the *British* Parliament; for who can say, but with the Cause the Effects may cease; and as it would be an Experiment of the most dangerous kind to slacken the Sinews of Industry and Husbandry, (which ought rather to be encouraged to proceed) for
ever

ever so short a Time, I hope it will never
 be attempted; for it can possibly answer
 no good end: Exportation may be restrained
 by Parliament, when found absolutely ne-
 cessary at any Time, and this being done
 only for a limited Time, does not take
 away the Farmer's Expectations for another
 Year; but the taking off the Bounty abso-
 lutely, tho' but to try the Experiment,
 would deprive the Husbandman of his
 accustom'd Hopes; his Industry would
 naturally languish, he would till his Grounds
 in a worse way, bad Soils which want
 expensive Manurings and laborious Tillage
 would be thrown up, and run again into
 Wood, Furze or Heath, according to their
 Nature; and the best Land would not
 Produce Half a Crop for want of Manure;
 and what may be the Consequences of those
 things in one bad Year God only knows,
 perhaps a real Famine, which our present
 Murmurings most righteously deserve, and
 which we ought with most fervent Prayers
 to deprecate. I presume enough has been
 said

said on this Head, not only to show how inadequate the Scheme of taking off the Bounty on Exportation of Corn, would be to lessen the Price of Provisions, but I apprehend even to demonstrate the greatest Danger from it, of introducing real Want, from trying it as an Experiment only. And yet I believe, that if the Proposal I have to make be accepted, and carried into Execution by an Act of Parliament, not a Farmer in *England* would complain at the Bounty's ceasing whenever Wheat shall be above Ten Pounds per Load; but of that in it's proper Place.

Another Complaint is the Engrossing of Farms; this is I confess an Evil, but perhaps not in the Light represented, that is, as to increasing the Price of Provisions; 'tis a parochial, if I may so distinguish it, rather than a national Evil; for tho' by the engrossing of many Farms into one Hand, there are fewer People left capable of bearing parochial Burthenis, such as executing
Parish

Parish Offices, and paying to the Relief of the Poor, &c. yet I can by no means see, but the Man who has most Rent, and most Tradesmen, Labourers, and Servants to pay, must have most Occasion speedily to make Money of his Corn, unless he be as rich as *Craesus*; and if he be, and may therefore be supposed to keep his Corn back, I always look'd upon a rich Farmer as a publick Benefit, and a poor one as a publick Mischief; for the rich Farmer can well stock and manure his Ground, and thereby make it produce for publick Use twice as much as a poor Fellow who can do neither; and tho' he may for a Time keep back his Corn, he must at last produce it, and sell as the Markets go; but as to his live stock, as such an one generally is full stocked, he must sell his Lambs, his Sheep, his Calves, his Oxen, and Cows when fat; because he as much wants to be rid of them when fit, as the Publick would wish him; for if he keeps those from Market his Feed must fail him, and he thereby will not

only

only lessen the Value of his present fat Cattle, but also deprive himself of making fit for Sale those next to come in; whereas the poor Farmer not having half a live Stock, may keep them back without suffering in that Way at least. Upon the whole of this Article, if I may venture to judge from long Experience, I think it may be for the publick Good, to restrain the Engrossing of Farms in some Degree, but not to such a Degree as to get Farms into the Hands of those Men, who are unable to make them produce the most they are capable of; and I believe I may safely say, it is not in the Power of all the great Farmers in *England* to raise the Price of Wheat Ten Shillings a Load, and at the same Time in the Nature of Things they must tend to lessen the Price of Mutton, Lamb, Beef, and Veal, which is as essential to the Interest of the Publick, as the Price of Bread itself; so that whatever the Legislature may see fit to do in this Respect, Provisions in general will not be much affected thereby.

There is also a Clamour against Farmers selling by Sample, and not bringing all the

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Corn

Corn they sell to the publick Market ; this I confess wants some Regulation, but not in the Way generally supposed ; it more wants to be regulated for the Benefit of the Farmer than the Consumer of Grain ; and I am ready to point out the Remedy whenever required ; in the mean Time I must shew, that this can in no sensible Degree, affect the Price of Corn. And in the Name of Common Sense, how will the Farmer's spending that Time of his Man and Horses, in carrying his Corn to an uncertain Market, which ought to be employed in ploughing his Fallows, or fetching his Dung from a Distance, tend to lessen the Price of Corn ? if he neglects a Day in these necessary Businesses, the Crop of next Year must suffer, which will not add to Plenty ; and if he is to keep more Men and Horses, he must have a better Price for his Commodities ; so that in neither Light will this be the Means of lessening the Price.

Another Charge upon the Farmers is, that they combine together to withhold Provisions, and thereby occasion an apparent
Scarcity ;

Scarcity ; but this is too absurd to be seriously treated: What! more than Two Hundred Thousand People, most of whom have pressing Landlords, greedy Tradesmen, and hungry Labourers to satisfy, withholding from Market the only Commodities they have wherewith to raise Money for the Cravings of so many? 'tis impossible: A few of the richest may keep back for a Time; but that can produce small Consequences only; and in the End even all the Commodities of such must be exposed to Sale, and 'if at one Time their withholding has any Effect, their offering to Sale at another Time must have a contrary Effect.

That Millers and Bakers may combine, is more probable than that Farmers can, because their Number is smaller; but that even these do, is to me hardly supposeable; and if they do, the Effect can't be of much Importance; the Interest of these is in general opposite to that of the Farmer, for of him they buy as cheap as they can, tho' they wish to sell as dear as possible; but the

Legislature has already remedied this Evil by fixing the Price of Bread in proportion to the Price of Wheat.

Thus have we I think on fair Examination found all these Clamours to be built upon the Sand, and that no Remedy for the publick Evil can be discovered by these Means ; for which Reason I doubt not the Wisdom of the Legislature has hitherto disregarded them ; and to me it appears plain, that a Surgeon would act as wisely by his Patient, in applying a Plaister to his Foot, in Order to cure a Wound in the Head, as these Empirics would do by the State, in seeking a Remedy from either, or all of these Quarters.

But there is one Scheme something more specious, and that is parcelling out the King's Forests, and granting them to private Persons, upon Condition of Enclosure and Cultivation, and subject to annual Rents to the Crown : And that this may be of some publick Utility I will not deny ; but that it would be a Remedy of sufficient Power to remove the Disease, and prevent its Return, appears

appears to me no way probable ; for the Quantity of Land capable of Cultivation, would not greatly add to the publick Benefit, when you deduct from thence the Loss of Timber ; an Article essentially necessary to the Security of the Kingdom, and the Number of black Cattle continually rising, and the Hogs annually fatted there, for the publick Use.

Thus have I endeavoured to shew you, Sir, that tho' there is a sensible Decrease in the State, yet no rational Means of Cure have ever yet been proposed ; for under some of the Heads I have shortly discussed, come all the Complaints I have read, or heard, touching the Price of Provisions ; and all the Remedies I have known proposed for Removal of the Evil ; and yet you will say, I have done nothing by all this of any publick Use, unless I can point out a Remedy more effectual ; this I sat out with a Promise of doing, but as this Letter has already been drawn out into a tedious Length, I will for the present leave you with this only, sufficient enough of itself I fear to
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tire your Patience, and give the Remainder
in another Letter, if after this Sample, you
signify your Inclinations to see another;
being now sufficiently tired with Writing,
a Business so out of my usual Way, and
Sleep very powerfully obtruding itself upon
me, it being very near the Midnight Hour.

I am, &c.

A FARMER,



The



The SECOND LETTER.

Honourable Sir,

YOUR Condescension in not only perusing my first Letter, but commanding me to finish my Plan, encourages me to proceed with Alacrity ; and I therefore now sit down to complete my Purpose, which I shall do with the same Freedom I used in my last, and as concise as an old Man can be, when talking on a favourite Subject, for such I confess the Encouragement of Agriculture is to me, altho' it be now no longer my Employment.

You know, Sir, for many Years, perhaps for Centuries, (for I never could discover how long) I and my Forefathers had the Honour of being Tenants to you and your Ancestors, in the Parish of _____ : Our Farm was not large, but sufficient fully

to employ two Teams of Horses; my Father work'd hard and was sober, and Providence so far prospered him that he was always able regularly to pay his Rent, and gradually encreased his Stock; at length about the Time of his Death, we had a moderate Stock on the Land, and as I endeavoured to tread in my Father's Steps, altho' at this Time a considerable Encrease of Rent was required, yet, as from my better Stock, I was enabled to make more of my Farm, I throve notwithstanding my advanced Rent; I always regularly paid you, Sir, as you will do me the Justice to acknowledge, and I soon disencumbered myself of a Sister's Portion, which was all the Burthen left upon my Stock by my Father. When this was done, as I still continued my Industry, I found myself grow richer; and at the End of each Year, I found I had Money left in my Hands, more than answered my Rent and Expences. I had now a long Lease before me, and therefore encreased my Stock to the full, and all the Residue of my Money I laid out in Manure, to the Amount sometimes of two, and sometimes three Hundred Pounds in a Year.

Providence

Providence was pleased to smile on my Endeavours, and I soon found a very considerable Advantage from it; I now encreased my Wealth fast, for in Consequence of these additional Charges, my Farm brought me some Years more than double what it produced before, and in the worst Years more than enough to compensate my encreased Expences: You, Sir, were pleased to see me thrive, and at the End of my Lease generously offer'd me another at the same Rent; but as I was in the middle of Life when my Father died, and had now myself worn out a Lease for twenty-one Years, and was therefore far advanced towards old Age, and as I had obtain'd a Competency, and had no Son to succeed me, I declin'd accepting your kind Offer. Till this Period of my Life I had turn'd my Thoughts only to my Business, without looking abroad into the World; I knew the Farmers in our Parish were all getting rich as well as myself; that even our Labourers were easy and happy, and our

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poor

poors Rates were very trifling, as we had only a few old and impotent Persons to maintain, who were past their Labour, and those we supported as well as ever they were able in their younger Days to support themselves: All this I knew, and I knew also this was not the Case in the Neighbouring Parishes; and I observ'd, that tho' in all my Time neither you, your Father, nor Grandfather ever once lost, or were delay'd in the Payment of any Rent, yet the Case was very different with the Gentlemen round you; their Farmers were always needy, and had a hard Scuffle to live; their Parishes were poor, their Labourers miserable, and their poors Rates high; but tho' I knew and observ'd all this, my Thoughts were too much employ'd in my own Concerns, to reason about the different Causes, which produced these very opposite Effects; but no sooner was I disengaged from Business, than my Mind, naturally active, being strongly struck with the glaring Contrast, could not be satisfied without
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an Enquiry into this Matter : at first I imputed it to the Farms being rented too dearly ; or to be a bad Soil, that would produce nothing tho' ever so well cultivated ; and therefore to satisfy my Curiosity I visited all the Parishes round me ; but to my Surprize I found not a Farm dearer rented than that which I had occupied, and the Soil in many Places much better ; but the Occupiers of the Farms I visited and their Parishes were all poor, and will be poor 'till Doomsday, unless the Legislature shall please to do something for their Relief. I enquired into the Cause of their Poverty, told them they did not keep sufficient Stocks to make the most of their Ground, and that they did not manure sufficiently ; but the only Answer I could get from them was, they had not Money to do it ; it might perhaps answer very well, and they would try it if they could. Amaz'd at this difference and not able to discover what I went in search of, I return'd to my Home ; and after long pondering to no Purpose, and

determin'd if possible not to be baulk'd, I visited a Farmer a few Miles from me, who rented a Farm of two Hundred Pounds a Year, which you know, Sir, was the same Rent I had paid to you ; and as I had heard he was a very honest and industrious Man, I offer'd to board with him; this he agreed to, and I attended his Business as closely as ever I did my own. I found his Fallows well managed, and in short the Business of the Plough was all done to my Satisfaction ; I found he had double the Quantity of Land for the Money I had had, and that tho' some was a poor Soil, yet he had much more good Ground than was in the Farm I had thriven upon, and therefore I could see no reason why he should not get rich if he pursued the same steps with me : I lent him an Hundred Pounds to expend in Manure, but 'twas with some Reluctance he ventur'd at it; however, venture at last he did, and I saw the Wheat-Laying well manured; and encouraged by my own experience, I expected a great Advantage

Advantage to arise to him from it. I stay'd with him till almost Harvest, and he had the Prospect of a fine Crop; but at that Time my own Affairs called me from him for about three Months; when I return'd, tho' I saw his Barns full and one Reek of Wheat, which he never had before; yet it did not answer my Expectations as to Quantity, from the Appearance it had on the Ground; however I waited the Sale of the Crop, and found by comparing the Produce of the Year before, with that of the then present Year, (for the Farmer kept good Accounts,) he had not received above Threescore Pounds more, tho' he had rather a great Laying, and better Ground in the last than the first Year; the poor Man upon this was almost inconsolable, for here were Forty Pounds as he thought sunk in Manure besides the additional Labour; I comforted him as well as I could by assuring him his Lent Grain and his Grass Seeds would shew him the Advantage of his Manure, and at least make the Matter even; and I told him
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if it did not turn out to my Expectations I would bear what should happen to be the Loss myself. Encouraged by this he proceeded with his Business, but without Manure, except what was made on the Farm, and I determined to continue with him this Year also. I would have advanced him more Money, but he would not accept of it, 'till he saw the ultimate Consequence of the last Project: He husbanded his Ground very well, and sowed his Barley and Grass Seeds in good Order, and every thing seem'd to prosper to my Wishes: He had a good Appearance of Barley upon the Ground, and the Grass Seeds were well taken; and as the Harvest drew near his Chearfulness encreased, and he began to repent he had not manur'd this Year also, as I had offer'd him Money to enable him so to do: I saw the Barley mowed, and he had a better Crop than ever he had before; but no sooner was the Corn ready to be carried, when I saw a Stranger setting Sticks upon every Tenth Cock, and in that Instant the

Idea

Idea struck me, that this was the Cause I had been searching for, that the taking up of Tythe in Kind is the Ruin of Agriculture, the Source of the Poverty of Farmers, of Landlords losing their Rent, of wretched Parishes, of Distresses of the Poor, and all public Evils complain'd of. Convinced at once this was the sole Difference between the Parish I was now in, and that in which I formerly lived, for there only an annual Sum of Money was paid and no Tythe taken up in Kind, I determin'd to pursue the Thought, and examine it to the Bottom; and with that view I waited the Event of the poor Farmer's Account; and upon a fair Balance it appear'd that in three Years he gain'd by manuring only Twenty Pounds and Ten Shillings, which was only Five Pounds and Ten Shillings Profit if I may call it so, for all his Additional Labour, and the Wear of his Cattle, Wheels, and Gear of all Sorts, Fifteen Pounds being to be allow'd him for the Interest of the Money.

I now return'd Home fatisfied in my own mind, that where Farmers cannot well manure they must be poor; and that where Tythe is taken in Kind they cannot manure to any Advantage worth speaking of; and that where Farmers are poor all other Evils follow of course to their Landlords, and their Parishes. But I could not long be contented without a further Search, fearing I might have too hastily concluded; and I travell'd from Home into several distant Counties, merely with a view of seeing if these Consequences were invariably the same; and in a Tour of Two Hundred Miles I everywhere found the same different Effects, constantly following the same different Courses: In particular I arrived at a pleasant Country Village West of *London* about two Days Journey, and being fatigued with too much Riding, I determin'd to spend several Days in it; I did so, and did not repent it; for here I saw the Truth of the conclusion in one view. I lodg'd in an Inn near a small River, which was a Boundary between

between two Parishes: In one of these, which was that in which I lodg'd, the Lord of the Manor, who has a very fine Estate there, holds the Tythes by Lease from some Dean and Chapter, and instead of taking up the Tythes in Kind, he has fixed a certain Portion of the annual Rent of Lands to be paid, even by those who are not his own Tenants; and here I found Cultivation and Manuring carried on to the greatest height, not a single Farmer, in this Parish, who is not already rich or getting so apace; not a common Tradesman who has not his Hundreds, and many their Thousands; the Labourers are chearful, and live well, none of them but have as good Bread as the Lord of the Manor himself, and none of them but has his hot Meal of Meat every Day, and good Beer brew'd in his own House; there are a few old and impotent People in their poors House, and they are maintain'd as well as ever they lived in their Days; in short, from the highest to the lowest all appear happy, and no Murmurs

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or

or Discontents, much less Mobs and Riots are heard of amongst them even in these Times : But cross the Rivulet and the Scene is changed ; Poverty and Distress stare you in the Face at once ; there are no rich Farmers ; the little Tradesmen are wretchedly poor ; the Labourers and their Families are miserable ; the Poors-house is full of People able to work, but unable to procure any ; and they have to keep from starving Numbers more than their House will hold ; and indeed to keep them from being absolutely starved is all they can do without actually starving themselves ; and as it is I was well assured, that the poors Rates are six Times as much in this last Parish as in the first ; but then to sum up all, and which accounts sufficiently for all, Tythe is there taken up in Kind. In the first of these Parishes there are Farmers who yearly spend three or four Hundred Pounds in the Article of Dung only ; and lay it all on Farms of about Two Hundred Pounds a Year ; in the last Parish not a single Farmer lays out a twentieth

tieth Part of that Sum on Manure, tho' this Parish lies much more convenient for procuring it, and the Farmers in it may come by it cheaper. I was in the few Days I staid here sufficiently confirm'd in the Truth of my first Sentiments on this Subject, and now having by Facts thus fully proved what the primary National Disease is, I venture at the Hazard of papal Excommunication to propose a Cure.

I have said I will propose a Remedy at the Hazard of papal Excommunication, for I have no fear of being anathematized on this Occasion by the Clergy of the Church of *England*; a venerable Body, for whom I have the greatest Respect, and to whom, as my Remedy is an universal Specific, (tho' some may call me Quack for the Expression) I am inclined to believe it may, as well as to all other Ranks and Degrees of Men, be highly useful.

The Remedy I propose to apply to all these publick and private Disorders and Complaints, is, that the Legislature lay the **Axe** to the Root, and by one short Act of

Parliament, abolish Tythes in Kind for ever; and in lieu thereof, give to all Persons intitled to Tythes, such a Portion of the fair Rent of every Estate in the Kingdom, now liable to Tythe, as shall sufficiently recompense them for what they lose: What that Portion ought to be, I submit to the Wisdom of Parliament; an Eighth, a Seventh, or even a Sixth, I believe would injure no Man; nay, perhaps even a Fifth might be borne without repining. And what, Sir, can hinder such a Scheme from being carried into Execution, as would injure no Man, and give Blessings to Millions? For no sooner will such a Law pass, but every Occupier of Lands will bestir himself; he will consider the Sum to be paid in Lieu of Tythe, as Part of his Rent: He will know all he produces more than that, is for himself: He will cultivate, manure, and stock to the utmost of his Power: This must encrease at once the Quantity of Corn raised, the Number of Cattle, and Sheep bred and fatted: This must produce both Work for the Labourer and Provisions: This will lessen your Poor: This will encourage your Merchants, Manufacturers, Trades of all Sorts,
your

your Mariners, your Ship-Builders: Universal Plenty must naturally follow: Your Ballance of Trade must be encreased in Proportion to the Increase of your Exports: This will encourage Population, raise the Value of Lands, and add to the publick Revenue.—In short, from this single Act, not a Man in the Kingdom, from the King upon the Throne to the Labourer in the Ditch, but must infallibly receive a Benefit; you'll hear of no more Mobbing, burning Mills, destroying Barns, and Graneries, or obstructing of Markets, but all will rejoice and be glad, and their future Prospects will induce them to bear quietly the Difficulties of the present Year.

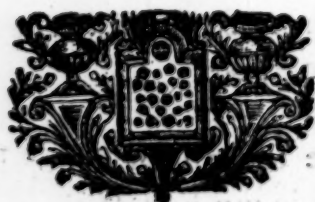
It may be thought by some, I am much too sanguine in my Expectations, but I am morally sure I am not; and I would undertake to demonstrate to any one skilled in Agriculture, that the Produce of the Lands of this Kingdom, will in a very short Time be double what it is now, if my Scheme be adopted; if it be, I will glory in it to my latest Breath; and if it be not, I shall be satisfied

(38)

satisfied in having laid this before you, as the
only Means in my Power of communicat-
ing to those who alone can establish it by
Law.

I am, &c.

A FARMER.



The



The THIRD LETTER.

Honourable Sir,

YOUR kind Reception and Acknowledgment of my two last Letters emboldens me to trouble you with a third, which I assure you shall have one better Circumstance than attends either of my former, viz. that of being shorter.

I finish'd in my last what I at first propos'd, when I thought of offering my Sentiments to you, and left Facts to speak for themselves; not doubting but you, and every other Gentleman in the Kingdom to whom you thought proper to hint the Idea, would be able to confirm my Observations by a variety of Instances; and being myself well satisfied that not one Instance of a rich Country Parish can be produced, where
Tythes

Tythes are paid in Kind, or one Instance of a poor Parish where Money is paid in Lieu of Tythes: But tho' there is no arguing against Facts with any Face, and tho' Facts known do not want Confirmation, yet one may demonstrate by Calculation how those Facts come to be; not by way of ascertaining that those Facts are, for that we see and feel, and therefore are convinced of without Argument or Calculation; but merely to employ our Minds, and to account to ourselves why Things are which we know to exist. In this way have I amuss'd myself since the last trouble I gave you, and now venture to expose the Result of my further Consideration on the same Topic to you; not fearing but that you, who know I do not hope to set up for an-accurate Arithmetician, and that I have no mathematical Skill, will pardon, if you cannot approve the manner of my doing it.

I must premise that my Calculations are formed from the Husbandry of my own Country,

Country, and that as this differs much in different Counties, so no Calculation that can be made will suit all; but apply the Method severally to the several Species of Husbandry, and the Conclusion will and must be the same from all.

I am better enabled to begin, having the annual Accounts of my own Farm before me: My Rent was Two Hundred Pounds per Annum; for which I had Three Hundred measur'd Acres of Land enclosed; One Hundred Acres were good arable Land, almost another Hundred indifferent, Twenty Acres of tolerable Meadow, and the rest poor rough Ground: when I began to manure largely I had a Wheat Laying of Half my best Land, this I fallowed well; that is, I plough'd it early in the Spring to rot the Weeds, and harrow'd the Surface to loosen the Earth from the Roots, and better to stifle the Grass; when this Purpose was answer'd, I turn'd it back; then harrow'd it to bring up the sown Grass of which it was full; when this was well roasted by the Sun, I ploughed it across; which is what we call

C

stirring

stirring it; then with my Drags and Harrows
 I work'd up the rest of the Grass which had
 escaped the first Harrowing; but finding it
 very rough and cloddy, after the first Rain
 I roll'd it well to break the Clods, and then
 re-harrow'd it; but for fear of not having
 sufficiently destroy'd the Grass, in the latter
 End of *June* and beginning of *July* I stir'd
 it again; after which I harrow'd and dragg'd
 it, and so left the Weeds exposed for Six
 Weeks to the hot Summer's Sun: It now
 answer'd my Wishes, I laid on Thirty Acres
 Twenty Loads of Dung to an Acre brought
 from a distant Town at the Expence of Seven
 Shillings a Cart Load; the rest I manur'd
 with Dung made on the Farm; and by the
 End of *September* it was all ridged up in good
 Order, and the whole was sow'd before the
 middle of *November*: The Wheat all came
 up well; but in the *March* following, and
 from thence to the next Harvest, I saw a
 considerable Difference in Favour of that
 Land which had received the expensive
 Manure; and after the Harvest I found a
 very sensible one indeed; for I had after the
 Rate of one Fourth more of thrash'd Wheat
 off

off every Acre of these Thirty Acres upon an Average than off the other ; besides near the double Quantity of Straw, to encrease the Manure of the next Year: I went on in much the same Manner with only small Variations according to Weather and Seasons for Four Years ; and when I had got the whole into good Heart, and clean, I broke up most of my rough Ground, which in Time, with considerable Expence for Tillage and Manure, came to bear tolerable Crops of Corn ; and now I began to reap largely the Fruits of my Expences ; and my Accounts each Year afterwards upon an Average stood nearly as follows :

FARM

Dr.

Cr.

To Rent	£200	Fifty Loads of Wheat sold upon an Average at £8	£400
Paid in lieu of Tythe (something more than a seventh of the annual Rent)	29	Two Hundred and Fifty Quarters of Barley at 20s.	250
Two Teams of good Horses which with Four Men Servants and the Wear of Horses and Tackle cost upon an Average	200	Fifty Quarters of Pease at 4s. per Bushel	80
Six Labourers in constant Employ at £20 a Year each	120	Profit upon Sheep and Lambs	200
Dung	200	Ditto from the Dairy and Poultry	80
Additional Hands in Harvest	50	Ditto from the black Cattle fattened and Calves sold to the Butcher	50
Interest of my Stock £1000 at 5 per Cent.	50	Hogs annually bred and sold (some fat but most lean)	80
Pro.	849	Balance in my Favour is	291

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Provisions for my self and Family being mostly the Produce of the Farm, I believe I may fairly say I was now every Year encreasing in Wealth £200 the £91 paying for all Necessaries purchased, which the Farm did not supply, together with the Interest of my Stock.

And now I will give you an Average Account as it stood before these Improvements;

FARM

FARM Dr.

Rent	£ 200
Tythe	29
Two poor Teams, Servants, &c.	100
Four Labourers and two of them not in constant Employ	60
Additional Hands in Harvest	20
Interest of Stock, £500 at 5 per Cent.	25
	£434

Cr.

Twenty Load of Wheat, at £8	£ 160
One hundred Quarters of Barley, at 20s.	100
Thirty Quarters of Pease, at 4s. per Bushel	48
Profit upon Sheep and Lambs	70
Ditto, Dairy and Poultry	80
Cattle sold lean, and Calves to the Butcher	30
Hogs annually bred and sold	65

£553
119

Ballance

By

(46)

By these fair States of the Accounts brought to an Average, and compared, the great Benefit of Manuring not only to the Farmer but the Public, appears as plain as the Sun at Noon; for as to the Farmer, tho' in the first part of my Time I lived as close as a Man could do, I did not save above £100 per Annum, instead of £200 which I saved afterwards when I lived better; and as it caused the same Land to produce so much more for the public Use, the Public was benefited in that Proportion. But now to apply these Calculations to the Point I have treated upon in my last Letter; if the Tythe had been taken up in Kind, what Advantage should I have reap'd then? On this Supposition the Tythe of my Corn only is £73. I lose my Tenth Lamb, my Tenth Fleece, the Tenth of my Poultry, the Tenth of my Dairy, my Tenth Calf, my Tenth Pig, all which put together can't be less Loss to the Farmer than £40 more, and, what is worse than all this, the Tenth of my Wheat Straw, my Barley Straw, my Pease Halm, and my Hay is gone too; so that I have lost a Tenth Part of my Manure for the next Year; and
unless

Unless I lay out more for Dung every Year than would otherwise be necessary, my Farm must gradually get poorer, 'till it comes to what it was before I began; and this is a Loss incalculable both to the Farmer and the Public: But suppose I endeavour to remedy this, and buy a Tenth part more Dung than usual, which will cost me Twenty Pounds at least, I then lose that Time in fetching it that should be employed upon my Fallows, and other necessary Business of the Farm; and not only this, I must still buy another Tenth to make up the Loss of the Produce of the Dung I made at home; so that I must add another Twenty Pounds to this Article also, besides the Loss of more Time from my Plough; and if we reckon nothing for this Loss of Time, tho' as Seasons happen it is often of great Prejudice to the next Crop, the Account will stand thus:

Additional Profit by manuring if Tythe
 be not paid in Kind £172
 If Tythe be taken up in Kind no more than 19

And now, Sir, can you, can the Public, can the Rulers of the Kingdom expect, that the
 the

that the Farmer, under these Disadvantages, can, or will even attempt, at a great Expence, and with great Care, Labour, and Hazard to make his Ground produce its utmost, without any Advantage to himself? for by the Time he has made his full Deductions, even the poor Balance above stated, to make the best Appearance on Behalf of manuring and good Cultivation, will vanish into Smoak, and never be found in his Pocket: Depend upon it I have pointed out the only Way to make the Nation wealthy and happy. 'Tis plain to common Sense, that the Land of the Nation is capable to double its Produce, and that nothing hinders it but the taking of Tythe in kind. Remove this, and you remove from your Country every Evil to be rationally feared; but let the Disease continue, and God only knows where it will terminate; for, as we now go on, Nineteen Twentieths of the Land is yearly impoverishing, and in Time will be able to produce nothing.

I am, &c.

A FARMER.

